

# The Lion

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## Are You Compassionate?

An Essay borrowed from a September 2005 Publication  
by Abbot Joseph

*Abbot Joseph, a monk for 25 years, has for the past eight years been the Abbot of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Redwood Valley, California, a Byzantine-rite monastery in the Ukrainian Catholic Church.*

I have nothing but compassion for people who misuse the term "compassion." This does not mean that I tolerate such misuse in the least, as you will see. One of the most beautiful divine qualities, in which we are invited to share -- "Be compassionate as my Father is compassionate" (Lk. 6:36) -- is all too often twisted into something that is tantamount to offering people a license to sin. "Compassion," in modern parlance, means something like universal tolerance with a dose of sentimentality, which turns a blind eye to evil. In the Byzantine tradition, Christ is often called "The Lover of Mankind" and "The Compassionate One." But He is never referred to as "The Tolerant One," and with good reason.

There are different ways to express compassion, based on the need of those to whom we show mercy. To show compassion to the hungry is to give them food; to show compassion to the homeless and unemployed is to help them find housing and work. If you wish to be compassionate to the sick or elderly, comfort and assist them. But if you want to be like Jesus in showing compassion to sinners, invite them to repent.

Christ came into the world to save sinners. He didn't come to make sinners feel good about themselves or to instruct us on how to blur the distinction between good and evil, based on current trends or personal preference. Some

people attempt to justify their (or society's) wrongdoing by saying, for example, that Jesus refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery and that He spent much of His time eating and drinking with sinners. They don't seem to be willing or able to understand why He did that.

Jesus' words to the adulterous woman, "Neither do I condemn you" (Jn. 8:11), are filled with forgiveness, not tolerance. She knew her own sin, and He knew that she did, whereas the would-be stone-throwers weren't reflecting upon theirs. So Jesus had to deal with them first. But after He forgave the woman, notice that Jesus did not say, "Go, follow your feelings, celebrate diversity, and try not to hurt anyone." He said, "Go, and sin no more." To the paralytic, He added a further warning: "Sin no more, lest something

worse befall you" (Jn. 5:14). Compassion does not equal tolerance, especially where sin is concerned. If compassion, like genuine love, is not rooted in truth, it is at best misguided emotion, and at worst a refusal to enlighten a soul in danger of damnation.

As for being found in the company of sinners, Jesus also gave His reason for that: Sick people need a physician. He ate with sinners, not to approve their lifestyle, but to call them to repentance (Lk. 5:29-32). Jesus knew, and the Church has always known -- until relatively recently, it seems -- that the salvation of souls is



the most urgent and essential task that can be undertaken on earth. Therefore, compassion is expressed most perfectly by whatever one does for the eternal benefit of others. The most genuine love is concern for their salvation. Does it occur to anyone that Jesus was being compassionate to the money-changers by casting them out of the temple, or to the Pharisees by His fiery denunciations of their hypocrisy? Everything He said or did was an expression of divine love and compassion, with the goal of leading people to everlasting life in Heaven. If people are unaware that their behavior is sinful, we must make them aware of it -- not to hurt, but to heal; not to condemn, but to save.

Sometimes compassion is equated with a sort of nebulous, ineffectual "kindness," one that ends up refusing to let someone know that his soul is in danger. God's kindness is different: "Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). We are not being compassionate if we allow friends or loved ones to walk the broad path to perdition simply because we are too "kind" to



upset them by attempting to awaken their consciences. Today's "kind and compassionate" people say that God loves us as we are, but I once heard a wise and necessary addition to that statement: "but He loves us too much to let us stay the way we are."

A number of years ago, a man who was a caregiver for AIDS patients (he was affiliated with a religious order) visited our monastery. In the course of our conversation I innocently asked him -- not realizing at the time how inflammatory a question this was -- if he encouraged the patients to reconcile with God before they died. His face acquired a horrified expression and he exclaimed: "Oh, no! We believe in a nonjudgmental God!" Is it compassionate to deny a sinner a last chance to repent? Is it compassionate thereby to consign him to Hell, with the kindly look on your face the last thing he sees? That is the devil's "compassion," not the Lord's.

The Lord's compassion, however, goes beyond calling sinners to repentance. We have to be careful not to fall into pharisaical self-righteousness by limiting our relationship with public sinners to a perfunctory, even haughty: "You need to repent!" To be compassionate is to be at the service of others' repentance. Jesus went to the Cross to prove the genuineness of His love for sinners and desire for our salvation. "By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:16). This does not mean that we literally have to die for sinners -- the only One who could effectively do that has done it -- but it does mean that we have to pray fervently and make sacrifices for others, to speak the truth in love, making whatever practical efforts we can to contribute to the Church's work of saving souls, that is, of leading souls to the Savior. To paraphrase the Apostle John, let us not be compassionate only in word, but in deed and in truth.

In clerical circles, there's another similarly abused word: "pastoral." It seems that almost any manifest disregard for Church teachings is practiced for "pastoral" reasons. This usually includes tolerance of abortion, homosexual behavior, artificial contraception, or invalid marriages. How is it pastoral for a shepherd to encourage his sheep to walk into the mouth of the wolf? How are we being sensitive and caring by numbing consciences that will be rudely awakened -- all too late -- on Judgment Day? What kind of physician of souls will offer a temporary palliative when the cure is available? Come on, doc, don't spare us the pain of the needle if the medicine is going to save our lives!

To speak the truth and to call sinners to repentance does not mean, however, to be hard-hearted, unfeeling, or unmoved by the real suffering and struggles of those who

are in some kind of moral dilemma or state of sin. To be compassionate is also to listen, to "suffer with," and to carry them in loving prayer to God. But it is not compassionate merely to leave it at that, especially if simply being with others gives them the impression that they need not repent. Repentance requires an inner awakening, an understanding of the state of one's soul, and a desire to do something about it. It is neither regret without amendment nor a ritual sterilized by routine. One must be willing to hear the word of the Lord and respond to it. Repentance is a redirection of our intentions, a change of heart, expressed by a change of behavior. But this will never happen with an "I'm OK, you're OK" approach.

Nothing is impossible with God -- not even fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church! But it will cost much. Eternal salvation is not a minor issue, and Christ warned us that the way is narrow and difficult. Ultimately, however, nothing else really matters. If you lose your soul, you lose everything. Salvation is worth the price of faithfulness to the word of God. True compassion is encouragement to pay it.

It matters what we believe and how we behave. The stakes are high in this adventure called human life. Truth is not relative and Hell is not merely a myth or a useful scare tactic for Christian schoolteachers. Aberrant behavior must not be elevated to an unalienable right, and personal opinions must not be put on a par with divine revelation. Don't be so "kind" as to keep silent while others enshrine sin as an acceptable alternative to righteousness.

So you see why I have compassion for those who abuse the term "compassion," especially if they do so for "pastoral" reasons. I'm calling them to repentance. I'm concerned not only for their souls, but also -- and especially -- for those whom they mislead, whom they lull into spiritual somnolence. If any souls are lost, let it be only because they remained hardened in willful rejection of God until death -- not because some "compassionate" person convinced them that they had no need to repent. §

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Opportunities for Lenten study are offered at St. Mark's on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 *The Orthodox Way* and on Saturdays at 10:00 o'clock *Greek East and Latin West*. Our scholars are most welcome to bring questions and observations to these informal classes. Often these contributions seem more focused and pertinent than those prepared and delivered by Fr. John. What a mercy. This Lent we will add Friday Lenten suppers at 6:30 PM and Stations of the Cross at 7:30 PM to our regular schedule.



# Prayer

by Frank Zaverall

NOT long ago I was asked by a Catholic Monsignor if I pray every day. Hhhmmm. Good question. Acting like an American politician, I never clearly said, but cited an Irish Jesuit internet site [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) which fabulously allows millions of people in 22 languages to pray or to contemplate scriptural passages with new material every day while on the computer. "Oh, those Jebbies," was the Monsignor's response. Being a diocesan priest all his life and not a member of any order, he, like many, was probably either disgusted with or in awe of the ever-aggressive Jesuits. Or, perhaps meditation with a computer-mate did not seem much like prayer to him.

Prayer was probably once a more common practice than it is today. Indeed, even the airlines in the 1960s had prayer cards on each food tray on flights long enough to serve food; those little cards contained the Catholic prayer before meals, a Protestant prayer and a Jewish blessing before eating. The cards went, the lettuce went, the silverware went, and now the food is gone. So much for progress.

Is prayer regressing like airline service, which would be an easy assumption? What is said about prayer these days? Does anyone care? Do people pray? I decided to do some looking around.

In 2004, *U.S. News* and *Beliefnet* (which has 65,000 prayer circles) conducted a survey on the prayer habits of Americans. The results:

- 64 percent of respondents say they pray more than once a day;
- 65 percent say when they pray about health, it is about mental health or depression;
- 56 percent pray for family members; three percent pray for strangers;
- 38 percent report the most important purpose of prayer is intimacy with God;

• 41 percent say their prayers are answered often;

• less than 2 percent say their prayers are never answered, and 74 percent say that when their prayers are not answered, the most important reason was because they did not fit into God's plan;

• 67 percent pray to give thanks to God.

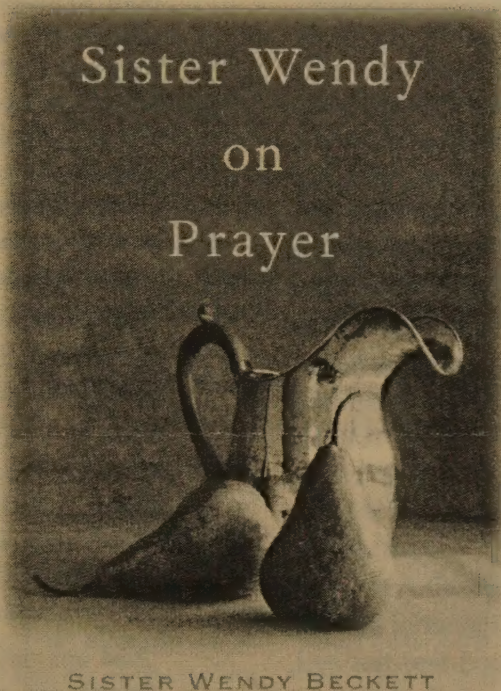
Most pray most often at home, and of those responding, 75 percent profess Christianity. That means 25 percent of those who pray are non-Christians. One would be remiss in not remembering that Muslims are required to pray five times per day. Judaism also has a requirement for prayer.

All of this is a lot of prayer. For money, for health, family members in trouble, personal difficulties, bad situations of the moment (an airplane nosedive, extreme turbulence, or a short landing in a Boeing 777 would be good examples). If the statistics are accurate, and if people are praying for the right reasons, non-selfishly, then perhaps prayer is not going down the airlines' demise of decent service as one would think in this very secular world.

How about selfish prayer? Prayer for a new car, a new home, money, a better job, and so many good things ("blessings"). A recent mailing had all these as possible things for which to pray in addition

to prayers for health, soul, or a walk with Jesus. All one had to do was lay out a paper "Bible prayer rug" printed with the face of a teary Jesus, kneel on it, pray for one's needs, check the prayer needs on a letter, put the paper "prayer rug" in a Bible at Philippians 4:19 (author's view: an outrageous misunderstanding of the passage), and return the letter and "rug" to a 57 year "very old" church, postage prepaid, along with a little "seed gift." All of this had to be done in 24 hours ("timing is important to God"). Easy enough. Too easy, in my view, and it is religious nonsense, akin to manipulative monetary dealings such as sub-prime loans and all kinds of financial instruments with strange names, relieving a sucker of his hard-earned money.

So what is prayer? A typical definition is found in *Webster's*: "to pray means to address God with





adoration, confession, supplication, or thanksgiving.” Who better to provide guidance than Christ himself? He did not pray for money, a new car, or even a new donkey. But, He did pray extensively for His Apostles. “I pray for them; not for the world do I pray, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one.” (John 17:9-11)

And that’s not the only guidance in Scripture from Christ. “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray.” (Matthew 6:5-9) At that, He taught us the Our Father, and at the end of the lesson, reminded us to forgive others their offenses, or we will not be forgiven ours. In a similar vein, He warned us to love our enemies, even to “pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who makes His sun to rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.” (Matthew 5:44-45) And a warning what to do when in prayer: “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mark 11:25)

And perhaps it’s the children who best exemplify what Christ said about prayer and its effectiveness. It’s not a cheap paper “prayer rug.” It’s not the money. It’s the simplicity. It’s the simplicity of children. And, it’s the simplicity of those who are like children, the victims of some kind of developmental or mental disability, a child’s mind in an adult body, who beautifully bring the rest of us to a realization that not they, but we have a disability: a disability of the loss of innocence, a disability not to absolutely believe, a disability to perhaps really not know. As one young chap with a cerebral palsy disability whom I know is fond of saying, “everybody has a disability; some people are

too smart.” Consider this wonderful e-mail story:

*God Lives under the Bed* (edited for sake of brevity)

“I envy Kevin. My brother Kevin thinks God lives under his bed. At least that’s what I heard him say one night. He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped to listen. ‘Are you there God?’ he said. ‘Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed . . .’ I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room. Kevin’s unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor, I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in. He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (6-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult. He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will. He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them.

“He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue.

“And he trusts God. Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to Christ, he comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God – to really be friends with Him in a way that is difficult for an ‘educated’ person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion.

“And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I’ll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed. Kevin won’t be surprised at all!”

This story certainly brings home the point Christ made when he rebuked his disciples about little children being brought to him: “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” (Luke 18:17)

There are many experts on prayer including saints and numerous points of view, but one recently caught my attention. Many readers of *The Lion* will recall the wonderful BBC series of the 1990s, which viewed in America on PBS, called “Sister Wendy’s Story of Painting.” Sister Wendy Beckett, a beloved Catholic nun (of 60 years, since age 16) who lives in Norfolk, England and educated at Oxford, brought an almost school girl enthusiasm to her art subject, but

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Heresy of Formlessness: The Roman Liturgy and Its Enemy* by Martin Mosebach (Ignatius Press, 2006). 210 pages.

THE *Heresy of Formlessness* is a collection of essays and meditations on the ancient Roman ("Tridentine") Mass and the post-Vatican II liturgical reform in the Roman Catholic Church, by the renowned German novelist and essayist Martin Mosebach.

The basic thrust of Mosebach's book is by no means new, and should be familiar to enthusiasts of the traditional Western Rite. Like other traditionalists, Mosebach argues that the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council were ill-founded and defective; that the New Mass (*Novus Ordo Missae*) is artificial and inferior to the ancient Roman Mass; and that many of the contemporary Church's problems and crises can be traced back to the ruthless suppression of the old liturgical forms and their substitution with new revised forms (allegedly closer to the worship of the "primitive Church").

The post-Vatican II period has produced mountains of "Traditionalist" literature arguing these same basic points, condemning the reforms and exalting the traditional forms of worship. I myself have devoured a fair amount of this literature, and while I am sympathetic with most of it, I am also somewhat mystified and put off by certain aspects of the polemic. But I must say that I have never read a book quite like Mosebach's, and I would not hesitate to place it far above the vast majority of "traditionalist" literature, too often marred by an excessively polemical approach, lacking in depth, moderation and nuance.

At first glance, the full title of the book, *The Heresy of Formlessness: The Roman Liturgy and Its Enemy*, seems polemical and negative to the extreme. Again, judging this book only by its cover, one might conclude that it's just another angry traditionalist screed. There are angry and polemical aspects to be found here for sure; but Mosebach is not preoccupied with these things. He has so much more to teach us in his profoundly beautiful and moving meditations on the Liturgy and the inescapably incarnational/liturgical nature of Christianity itself.

Mosebach, by his own admission, is not a professional theologian. This, of course, could lead some crit-

ics to conclude that he doesn't know what he's talking about. Likewise, some might point out that Mosebach is not a "trained liturgist" when he speaks of the meaning of Christian liturgy and its development through the centuries. (This, of course, is the same accusation made against Pope Benedict XVI by opponents of his recent *motu proprio* allowing greater freedom in the celebration of the traditional Roman Rite). But, in fact, Mosebach's very lack of these credentials is precisely what makes his words so fresh and interesting to me. He approaches the topic of the liturgy, not only as a poet and artist, but also as a man who has returned to the Church through the re-discovery of the old rite of Mass which he experienced, but never really understood, as a child. He knows the Mass, not as an academic, but as a man who has come to experience it and believe in it as the very foundation of his faith and Christian existence. Though Mosebach does not possess a doctorate in divinity, it seems to me that he represents a far better class of theologian, the only class recognized by the fourth-century desert father Evagrius Ponticus: "If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian."

Mosebach is well aware that his love of the ancient liturgy makes him something of an unsophisticated troglodyte in the eyes of many. He does not dispute this accusation; in fact, he delights in identifying himself as a "Stone Age materialist." Because he holds "the assumption that material actions have effects in purely spiritual regions," (the highest material action, of course, being the act of sacrifice), Mosebach admits that he is something of an "animist" still "on the lowest rung of mankind", for whom "all matter is so full of spirit and life that they simply pour from it" (p. 22). Mosebach believes that Christians, in experiencing the Mass, are participating in the very fulfillment of the aspirations of all religious cultures, primitive, Jewish, or Gentile (it's no accident, by the way, that the traditional Canon of the Mass references three mysterious sacrificial figures from the Book of Genesis – Abel the primitive human sacrifice, Abraham the father of the Israelite animal sacrifices, and Melchizedek the Gentile king who sacrificed bread and wine). "It was clear to me," Mosebach writes,

that the Catholic Mass in its traditional form – unchanged for more than 1500 years – should be seen, not as the rite of one particular religion, but as the fulfillment of all religions, having absorbed and enveloped them all. I was uniting myself with all men who had ever lived, from the most distant times until the present, because I was doing what they had done. Participating in the traditional Sacrifice of the



Mass, I felt that I was a human being doing something befitting a human being, that I was fulfilling the most important duty of human existence – perhaps for the first time – and that I was doing this for all the others who did not want to, or could not, fulfill this duty. (p. 23)

Mosebach believes that the liturgy has greatly suffered at the hands of academics and experts. The liturgy has been analyzed to death from a purely historical point-of-view, to the point where it has lost all sense of mystery and transcendence. It has come to be seen as a mere human artifact, a product of the vicissitudes of history, a thing that can be tampered with to fit the mentalities and habits of changing societies. The result of this meddling by specialists is that “all have lost something priceless, namely, the innocence that accepts [the liturgy] as something God-given, something that comes down to man as gift from heaven” (p. 25).

In this connection, Orthodox readers will be intrigued by Mosebach’s frequent references to the example of the Orthodox Church and her liturgical tradition as being relatively untouched by this modern madness. “The idea that we [Roman Catholics] have something to learn from Orthodoxy,” Mosebach admits, “is not a popular one. But we must accustom ourselves to studying – and studying thoroughly – what the Byzantine Church has to say about sacred images and the liturgy” (p. 91). Early in the book, Mosebach quotes the twentieth century Russian Orthodox theologian and martyr Pavel Florensky: “Our liturgy is older than us and our parents, even older than the world. The liturgy was not invented, it was discovered, appropriated ... *Our liturgy comes, not from man, but from the angels.*” (p. 23).

Likewise, Mosebach cites the famous passage from the Treatise *De Spiritu Sancto* of Saint Basil the Great, wherein the holy Doctor tells us that many of the Church’s liturgical traditions (such as prayer facing the East, or the invocation of the Holy Spirit) are not found explicitly in Scripture, or invented by men, but were received by the Church directly from God himself. And if the liturgy, even in its most intricate details, is a revelation from heaven, it must be treasured and respected, just as we treat Sacred Scripture. Even the rubrics of the liturgy are sacred, according to Mosebach, and cannot be ignored or jettisoned without dire consequences for Christian faith and worship. “The Hasidic Jews ... said that every word in their holy books was an angel. That is how I want to regard the rubrics of the Missal: for me, every prescription of the Missal is an Angel.” (p. 36). This, for Mosebach, is exactly the right attitude that Christians

should have when approaching the liturgical tradition of the Church. It is not a thing created by mere mortals, which can be dissected or experimented upon. It is a divine mystery that can only be entered into with reverence, fear and humility.

It is this approach to the Liturgy, according to Mosebach, that has been almost completely lost with the introduction of the modern Roman Catholic Liturgy, a committee-produced product, tailor-made specifically for modern man’s own peculiar habits and prejudices. Annibale Bugnini, the architect of the *Novus Ordo Missae*, admitted that his goal was to conform the Liturgy to the standards of modern secular man as the perfect and normative and final man. It is not hard to see why nothing less than the complete suppression of the ancient Liturgy was necessary to bring this about. Bugnini was perhaps right about one thing: modern man has somehow lost the natural ability to worship and sacrifice. As Mosebach says, once we were all *homines religiosi*, “the kind of man who believes he can make a connection between the macrocosm and the microcosm by means of sacral acts, who sees the material form as a mirror of transcendence, and who lives in the presence of God (or of the gods)” (p. 54). We have not been the same since the Enlightenment, and what we need are not new forms reflecting to our inability to worship, but the old forms to teach us how to worship like proper human beings, like our ancient fathers did.

The “heresy of formlessness” to which the title refers is the idea that Christianity is some sort of religious philosophy or system of ethics that is entirely separate from, or indifferent to, its historic and traditional forms of liturgical and artistic expression. Christianity is not really a system of ideals or moral precepts, most of which can be found clearly in other religions and philosophies. “The only new thing in Christianity,” writes Mosebach,

and what distinguishes it from all other religions – what makes it, so to speak, the capstone of all religions – is not the doctrine, but the Person of the God-man, his birth from a Virgin, his sacrificial death for the sins of mankind, his Resurrection from the dead. It is a historical person, not a mythical one, and the historical events of his life can be fairly precisely dated from the reports of the officials of an obscure Roman province ... At the center of Christianity, however, stands the miracle of the Incarnation. Only against the background of the Incarnation do all the words and deeds of Jesus exercise their binding claim upon us. (pp. 66-67)

There simply cannot be a Christianity without Liturgy



and Sacrifice. Form and content are inseparably wedded in Christianity; therefore, in Mosebach's understanding, "a loss of form implies a loss of content." Too often the Church's historic forms of worship and art are dismissed as merely external, ornamental, and therefore dispensable or superfluous. Hence the need of self-appointed reformers to strip these elements away to find some sort of pure, disincarnate Christian philosophy. This, for Mosebach, is nothing less than heresy and the contradiction of authentic Christianity. And the notion that the traditional and historic forms of the Liturgy are merely human artifacts, an add-on to "basic" Christianity, which can be rearranged, adjusted or updated every once in a while by experts, has been nothing short of disastrous to the Faith itself. The core of the traditional Mass is "the revelation of Christ, and therefore the religious man will want to treat the Mass in its entirety as revelation" (p. 36). We do not tamper with revelation. We can only receive it with humility, or reject it as unpalatable.

This "heresy of formlessness" to which Mosebach refers is actually a new form of a very old thing – the heresy of iconoclasm, which is "characterized by both the destruction and inability to create images" (p. 85). Iconoclasm has appeared periodically throughout the history of Christianity, most notably in the eighth and ninth centuries in the Byzantine Church, and in the sixteenth century in the Western Church. Mosebach, however, believes that today's iconoclasm is a far more destructive and virulent strain than the classical Byzantine or Protestant varieties. At least the great iconoclastic movements of the past were based on some sort of theological principle: both Byzantine and Protestant iconoclasts, for instance, appealed to a particular interpretation of the Second Commandment regarding "graven images." The new iconoclasm does not make these sorts of arguments, and does not display the same "holy rage." Mosebach believes that we have in our time "the first example of a liturgical iconoclasm that has come from a religious anemia, an anti-ritualism on the basis of a religion that is feeble" (p. 63). This is one of the major enemies that threatens traditional Christianity in the twenty-first century, which can only be resisted by an utter refusal to abandon or adulterate the worship of our fathers.

In such a short space, it is impossible even to touch briefly on all the brilliant passages of *The Heresy of Formlessness*. Instead, I will merely whet the appetite of potential readers with a short preview of chapter 10, "Revelation through Veiling in the Old Roman Catholic Liturgy." For me, this is the most intriguing

sections of the book. According to Mosebach, in traditional Christian liturgy, "to veil something is to reveal it." In the traditional Mass, we veil the sacred ministers, the sacred vessels, sacred words, sacred actions, and sacred images. Mosebach traces this mysticism of veiling in the Christian liturgy back to "three strands of tradition" – "the Jerusalem Temple, with its curtain veiling the Holy of Holies"; "the ritual of the epiphany of the monarch" in Byzantium (apparently derived by the Eastern Roman imperial court from the Persian Empire); and the liturgical practice of the *Anastasis*, or Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

In the Western Rite, the rubrics direct us to cover the crosses in our churches and our homes with veils during Passiontide. And in the Liturgy of Good Friday, there is a very elaborate and dramatic ceremony of the unveiling of the Holy Cross before it is solemnly adored by the faithful. Why all of this veiling and unveiling? According to Mosebach,

Here the purpose of the veiling was not to withdraw the cross from sight: it was so that the cross would be treated like the real Cross; from being a devotional object, a cultic object, a sacred symbol, it would once again become the real instrument of torture on which Christ died. Thus we see that the veiling of the crosses is intended only to stress the historical nature of the work of Redemption, just as the name of Pontius Pilate – that modestly successful provincial administrator – is used in the Creed: it speaks of a real death on real cross in a concrete place at a precisely identifiable hour of world history (p. 170).

Mosebach further explains the purpose of liturgical veiling with reference to the consecrated Host:

Veiling ... becomes a visible sign of the nimbus of grace and holiness that has become invisible to human eyes. Veiling, in the liturgy, is the halo that is by nature appropriate to the sacred vessels and their even more sacred contents ... Veiling, in the liturgy, is not intended to withdraw some object from view, to make a mystery out of it, or to conceal its appearance. The appearance of the veiled things is common knowledge anyway. But their outward appearance tells us nothing about their real nature. It is the veil that indicates this. If one draws this veil aside, and the veils that lie behind it, like peeling an onion, and penetrates to the core of the mystery, one is still confronted with a veil: the Host itself is a veil ... (p. 172).

The theology of liturgical veiling is expressed beautifully in the ancient Roman Mass, but it is even more beautifully expressed (as Mosebach points out) in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. The Eastern Orthodox iconostasis, deriving from the early Christian practice



of enveloping the altar behind a curtain during the Canon, is a perfect example of a liturgical veil. Though many medieval Western churches had "rood-screens", Mosebach observes that even without this feature, in the traditional Western Rite, "the celebrants' backs, clothed in vestments of the same color, also formed a wall in front of the sacrificial action" (p. 165). And in both the Eastern and Western Rites, for instance, the Canon/Anaphora is traditionally recited silently, thus forming a sort of auditory veil.

(As an aside, it never hurts to emphasize that the rubrics of the Western Rite assume a silent recitation of the Canon and many of other prayers of the Mass. Yet I fear that the silent Canon is becoming the exception, rather than the rule, in many of our churches. The Western Rite assumes certain nuances in the recitation of prayers. Not everything is "belted out" as a radio announcer or auctioneer might do. Some parts of the Mass are intoned or said in a loud voice, some are said in a subdued but audible voice, and some are said in the secret or mystic voice. In this, the Latin tradition is no different from the Byzantine. One wonders, then, how monstrous *Novus Ordo* style sound systems and perpetually "miked" clergy have found their way even into Byzantine Rite Orthodox churches! All of this is inimical to the traditional liturgical ethos, as explained by Mosebach).

Modern liturgists (Catholic, Protestant, and even some Orthodox), however, have done their best to discourage and eliminate the practice of veiling, almost suggesting that it's a clerical conspiracy to keep the laity from the "real action" (hence the *Novus Ordo*'s insistence that the laity be able to hear and see absolutely everything that goes on at the altar). Such scholars have generally missed the entire point of veiling in the Liturgy. Veiling is not meant to be a clerical shield to protect holy things from the profane gaze of the somehow "unworthy" laity. Rather, holy things are veiled not to *conceal* but to *reveal* exactly what they are to the faithful. In reality, this is nothing more than the theology of the Eucharist, the Divine Body and Blood of Christ hidden beneath the veils of bread and wine.

*The Heresy of Formlessness*, though a brief and somewhat disjointed collection of literary odds and ends, is truly the best defence, not only of the classical Roman Mass, but also of the traditional orthodox catholic attitude and approach to the liturgical and sacramental life. Mosebach, in such a short space, has captured the spirit of the traditional Liturgy in a way that few modern authors have been able to do. I believe that this is an immensely important book, written at a very crucial time. It was written, of course, for a Roman Catholic audience, but I believe that Orthodox Chris-

tians, regardless of rite, will find much to admire and learn from here. Though Mosebach is a member of the Church of Rome, I would venture to say that what he is really explaining and defending (without knowing it) is what we know and love as Western Orthodoxy.

At the risk of sounding preachy, I would not hesitate to say that this book should be required reading for all Western Rite Orthodox clergy, who endeavor to keep the riches of the ancient Latin liturgical tradition alive within the bosom of Orthodoxy. This is a gargantuan task, and one that requires not only great determination but also great humility and faithfulness. The Western Rite is not some human artifact, or a product of some ecclesiastical bureaucrat's brilliance or ingenuity. We talk about its "revival" or "restoration" or "approval" in the modern Orthodox Church, and defend its historical development. But if we are to survive and succeed, we must believe that the Western Rite has been given to us a gift, even a revelation, by God himself. "*Ego enim accepi a Domino quod et tradidi vobis*" (I Cor. 11:23). That means that pet theories, armchair theologies, private revelations, personal improvements, fresh infusions from exotic sources, or ideological axes-to-grind (even in the name of one's perception of what constitutes authentic "Orthodoxy") take a back seat to the received and objective fact of the rite, as expressed in its authoritative texts and rubrics. The Holy Spirit is the pilot of the Church, and the author of the Liturgy. Likewise, the only personality in the Liturgy that matters is that of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. What a relief to the human celebrant of the liturgy that, from the moment he has begun Mass, he

has surrendered his personality to take on a far greater role – and more than a role: he has taken on objective embodiment. The priest's face is seldom seen, for when he briefly turns to the congregation with his greeting "*Dominus vobiscum*", he keeps his head slightly bowed. It is the Crucified, towering over the altar, who looks at those praying; he is the one who is acting, while his sufferings are recalled, in the tradition's authentic formulae, to the minds of the participants (p. 50).

Remember: Every word, every rubric, is an Angel. Every action is a revelation from heaven. "*Si quis apponerit ad hæc, apponet Deus super illum plagas scriptas in libro isto ... Et si quis diminuerit de verbis libri prophetiæ hujus, auferet Deus partem ejus de libro vitæ, et de civitate sancta, et de his quæ scripta sunt in libro isto...*" (Apoc. 22:19-20). Let us obey what we so often hear in the divine gift and revelation that we call the Byzantine Rite: "Wisdom! Let us attend!" – **Benjamin J. Andersen, B.Phil. M.Div. (Br. Benedict, OSB.Obl.)**



her acclaimed knowledge of art from the earliest cave drawings to Modernism was mind-boggling. Nor was she embarrassed by any piece of art, not a single pose, not one body part; she was not a prude. Sister Wendy has now published a book about prayer entitled *Sister Wendy on Prayer*. It's as familiar to her as art since she spends every day praying in seclusion as a hermit, but apparently is not a mere loner, but loves to laugh and chat and is socially adept. Nuns can be real people! And writers too – this is her 15<sup>th</sup> book.

One of her best points of view is what one should do during prayer. She says people want to be told the answer, for that is the safe way out. Her answer is the same kind of simplicity that she employed to tell us about art, and the same simplicity of a child-like prayer to an awesome God: “[S]tand before God unprotected, and you will know yourself what to do. I mean this in utter earnest. Methods are of value, naturally, but only as something to do ‘if I want to’ which in this context of response to God means ‘if he wants me to.’ I may feel drawn to meditate, to sing to Him, or to stay before Him in, say, an attitude of contrition or praise. But we cannot say prayers at all unless we know also the prayer of silence. In silent prayer there are no words and hence no thoughts. We are still. This silence is nothing to be afraid of. Five or ten minutes, whatever can be spared. You are just there to stand in His presence and let Him take possession of you.”

No time for prayer? Sister Wendy emphasizes that “. . . your desire to pray will never interfere with your obligations. It cannot. Your responsibilities are part of you, and it is this real, burdened, perhaps even overburdened, person whom God loves and in whom He believes.” That alone lifts some of the burden, doesn't it, dear reader?

Sister Wendy believes there are different levels of prayer. The deepest she says is a “wordless union with God that is indescribable.” It's being touched at a great depth, even if for a mere moment. Then there is what most would be comfortable with as prayer. On our knees, perhaps in church, perhaps at home, petitioning, glorifying, thanking, or telling God how we feel. This is what makes up church services, meditation, pondering a passage of Scripture. With less structure, prayer is what Sister Wendy calls “spiritual talk.” Not addressing God, but engaging in the mystery of what He is. She says listening to sermons comes to mind, quoting Saint Teresa of Avila who said she had never heard a sermon so bad she could not get something from it (perhaps

even compassion for the preacher.) Teaching children about God comes into this level, as does talking with friends about the things of God.

As Orthodox Christians, we can get to the deepest level of prayer, a wordless union by beginning with the words of what is known as the “Jesus Prayer”: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” When saying this prayer, as Bishop Kallistos Ware points out in *The Orthodox Way*, we should avoid “so far as possible any specific image or picture. In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, ‘The Bridegroom is present, but he is not seen.’ We are to concentrate our full attention upon, or rather within, the words.” Not mechanically, but with purpose, the words pronounced with no tension, violence or undue emphasis. This prayer starts as one of “the lips,” grows inward becoming “prayer of the intellect,” and finally “descends into the heart and is united with it, and so the prayer becomes prayer of the heart, or more exactly, prayer of the intellect in the heart.” This results in an unceasing state of prayer which continues even while we are busy doing other things, of which there are plenty to do. “The Jesus Prayer helps to lift the whole life, body and soul, to a level where the senses and imagination no longer seek for outward change or stimulation . . .” (Mother Maria of Normanby, *The Jesus Prayer: the Meeting of East and West in the Prayer of the Heart*) The “Jesus Prayer” at its highest level will help us reach St. Paul's goal for us: “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) I think Sister Wendy would agree.

Does prayer work? Ah, once again Sister Wendy has a common sense answer that I admire. As she rightfully points out, when we turn to God in any way, we are praying, not necessarily asking for something. Sometimes we explicitly ask for things – good weather, or health, or exam results. There is nothing wrong with that. But, “God is not a puppeteer who will stretch out and change the weather, adjust the cells of our body, or haggle with the examiner's markings.” The essential plea is not that God will change the world, but that “He will strengthen us to bear the impact of it.” Asking God's help protects us against all issues, even the ills of good fortune, and what is perceived to be “good fortune” can often bring about more grief and pain than ever encountered; just ask the bankrupt lottery winners. Treating God as a “Wizard of Oz,” pulling levers to control mankind or the world or dispensing favors, won't work whether we travel down the Yellow Brick Road with or without a paper “prayer rug.”



The efficacy of prayer is a very difficult subject. Science has intervened, trying to prove or disprove that prayer works through modern medicine; studies have groups of patients divided into one group which has people praying for them, unknown to the ill, and another group with prayers being said, also unknown to the ill. Conflicting results have arisen. Sometimes those being prayed for improve, while other times staying the same, or even worsening. Similar results for those not prayed for, so the answer is unclear. Personal experience has shown me that prayers for two different troubled teenagers offered by the very highest church authorities and by a large circle of family and friends resulted in different outcomes. One is doing far better, the other the same, maybe worse. How can that be? Is God not even-handed? Similarly, on the big picture, we see religious leaders – Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and even others – come to Assisi to pray for peace. And what does the world get? More war and trouble. We pray constantly for our leaders, religious and lay, and sometimes we get wisdom, other times complete acts of stupidity or even criminality. Is it God? No, I think it's free will on steroids. "Man is rational . . . he is created with free will and is master over his acts." (St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*)

I think Sister Wendy's response quoted above is good advice. It's the strength given us through prayer that is valuable. If people are given the strength to become peaceful, one person at a time, the world will change. If people, one by one, are given the strength to become wise, wisdom will prevail. In addition, there are too many variables to draw conclusion about the success of particular prayers. And, as mentioned before, prayer that is a petition must be done for the right reason: "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." (James 4:3) Another approach is "do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask Him; for He desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to Him in prayer." Evagrius Ponticus, *De Oratione*. In addition, what we ask for must truly be Christ's desire (God's will). "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." (1 John 5:14)

There is so much more to Sister Wendy's book. And the issue of prayer could easily become a theological treatise thousands of pages long with an equal number of footnotes. But something among Sister Wendy's

closing thoughts is that of sainthood and worth noting. Sister Wendy says that if she were to define a saint, ". . . it is somebody completely illuminated by the love of God. Or . . . somebody whom God totally possesses in prayer. There is no holiness without prayer . . . always remember, a yearning of the will, not of the emotions – is prayer." (Emphasis added.)

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The Lections for the Anglican Chant Matins offered at St. Mark's Church on Sundays at 9:45 o'clock are those set forth in the 1943 Lectionary authorised for what is commonly known as the 1928 American *Book of Common Prayer*. Oddly there is no Antiphon provided for the Lenten use of the *Venite* in the BCP. The Lenten Antiphon from *St. Dunstan's Plainsong Psalter* is:

"The Master calleth not the righteous but sinners to repentance \* O come, let us adore him."

The Proper Psalms for the next several Sundays are:

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Quinquagesima         | 103     |
| First Sunday in Lent  | 50      |
| Second Sunday in Lent | 86, 142 |
| Third Sunday in Lent  | 25      |
| Fourth Sunday in Lent | 18:1-20 |
| Fifth Sunday in Lent  | 51      |
| Sixth Sunday in Lent  | 24, 97  |
| Easter Day            | 93, 111 |

The excellent new books, *Greek East and Latin West* by the Rev. Dr. Andrew Louth and *The Heresy of Formlessness* by Martin Mosebach are both available at St. Mark's Bookstore. For those away from the parish these are most readily obtained at independent bookstores like Eighth Day Books in Wichita, Kansas ([www.eighthdaybooks.com](http://www.eighthdaybooks.com)). St. Vladimir's Seminary Press publish *Greek East and Latin West* and Ignatius Press publish *The Heresy of Formlessness*. We heartily recommend both books to the good health of our readers. Mosebach, from his early mishaps as an acolyte to his discovery of the old Mass as an adult, affords both laughter and tears to any of us who have lived through the most trying decades of the Reform of the Latin liturgy excreted upon the churches since Vatican II.



| SUNDAY  | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY   |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>MARCH MMVIII</b><br>Saint Mark's Orthodox Christian Church<br>1405 South Vine Street, Denver, CO 80210<br>Please note that Choir rehearsals and other Guild meetings are announced in the Sunday bulletins as appropriate.<br>Please see other useful websites at : <a href="http://www.andrewespress.com">www.andrewespress.com</a> and <a href="http://saintlaurenceosb.org/">http://saintlaurenceosb.org/</a> |   |  |  |  |   | <b>1</b><br><i>St. David of Wales, B.C.</i><br>Rosary – 8 AM<br>Matins – 8:30 AM<br>Latin Mass – 9 AM<br>Book Study – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM                                     |
| <b>2</b><br><b>SEXAGESIMA</b><br>Matins – 7:30 AM<br>Early Mass – 8 AM<br>School – 9:10 AM<br>AC Matins – 9:45 AM<br>High Mass – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 4 PM   | <b>3</b><br><i>feria</i><br>Our Metropolitan Philip has declared that March is Church Women's Month. Among the special observances will be a Retreat with Iconographer Mary Gay Sullivan Coit on the mystery of Holy Icons. | <b>4</b> <i>St. Lucius of Rome</i>   | <b>5</b><br><i>feria</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Mass 12 NOON<br>Evensong – 5 PM  | <b>6</b><br><i>feria</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM  | <b>7</b><br><i>Ss. Perpetua &amp; Felicity</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM   | <b>8</b><br><i>feria</i><br>Rosary – 8 AM<br>Matins – 8:30 AM<br>Latin Mass – 9 AM<br>Book Study – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM  |
| <b>9</b><br><b>QUINQUAGESIMA</b><br>Matins – 7:30 AM<br>Early Mass – 8 AM<br>School – 9:10 AM<br>AC Matins – 9:45 AM<br>High Mass – 10 AM<br>VESTRY 11:45<br>Evensong – 4 PM  | <b>10</b><br><i>The Forty Holy Martyrs</i><br>The Church Women plan a St Patrick's Day Luncheon for Sunday, 16 March. Why not support the CW for one Sunday this season and give your usual Oasis a day off?                | <b>11</b><br><i>feria</i>  | <b>12</b><br><i>Ash Wednesday</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Mass – 12 Noon<br>Evensong – 5 PM<br>Mass – 7:00 PM                           | <b>13</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM | <b>14</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM<br>SUPPER 6:30<br>STATIONS 7:30 PM | <b>15</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Rosary – 8 AM<br>Matins – 8:30 AM<br>Latin Mass – 9 AM<br>Book Study – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM |
| <b>16</b><br><b>FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT</b><br>Matins – 7:30 AM<br>Early Mass – 8 AM<br>School – 9:10 AM<br>AC Matins – 9:45 AM<br>High Mass – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 4 PM  | <b>17</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br><i>St. Patrick</i><br>Matins – 9:30 AM<br>Mass – 10:00 AM  | <b>18</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 9:30 AM<br>Mass – 10:00 AM   | <b>19</b><br><i>St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Mass 12 NOON<br>Evensong – 5 PM                    | <b>20</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM | <b>21</b><br><i>Repose of Saint Benedict</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM<br>SUPPER 6:30<br>STATIONS 7:30 PM                                    | <b>22</b><br><i>Ember Saturday</i><br>Rosary – 8 AM<br>Matins – 8:30 AM<br>Latin Mass – 9 AM<br>Book Study – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM  |
| <b>23</b><br><b>SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT</b><br>Matins – 7:30 AM<br>Early Mass – 8 AM<br>School – 9:10 AM<br>AC Matins – 9:45 AM<br>High Mass – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 4 PM   | <b>24</b><br><i>S. Gabriel the Archangel</i><br>Matins – 9:30 AM<br>Mass – 10:00 AM   | <b>25</b><br><i>The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin</i><br>Matins – 9:30 AM<br>Mass – 10:00 AM<br>MASS 7 PM   | <b>26</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Mass 12 NOON<br>Evensong – 5 PM | <b>27</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM | <b>28</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 7:00 AM<br>Mass – 7:30 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM<br>SUPPER 6:30<br>STATIONS 7:30 PM | <b>29</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Rosary – 8 AM<br>Matins – 8:30 AM<br>Latin Mass – 9 AM<br>Book Study – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 5 PM |
| <b>30</b><br><b>THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT</b><br>Matins – 7:30 AM<br>Early Mass – 8 AM<br>School – 9:10 AM<br>AC Matins – 9:45 AM<br>High Mass – 10 AM<br>Evensong – 4 PM  | <b>31</b><br><i>The Lenten Proper FERIA (see St. Austin's Plainsong Missal)</i><br>Matins – 9:30 AM<br>Mass – 10:00 AM  | A wonderful gift of the liturgical Tradition of over 1,500 years to our Lenten observance is the provision in the Altar Missal of a Proper Mass for every of the 40 days of Lent. These 'Proper Ferias' are set to Gregorian chant in the <i>St. Austin's Missal</i> . These Propers are observed on every Day of Lent if only by a commemoration as on the Annunciation. It has long been the practice of Western Orthodox parishes to offer frequent devotions in Lent and to encourage the Faithful to order their days in this holy Season with the purpose of attending Divine worship. The practice of Confession is certainly recommended EARLY in Lent rather than saving up all that naughtiness for the very end of Holy Week. Why not confess early and confess often - sort of like voting in Chicago? |  |  |   |  |



The Very Reverend Father Donald David Lloyd, D.D. observed his Ordination anniversary (St. Matthias' Day) with a splendid Dinner party at Nick's in Jackson, Mississippi. Nick is, of course, a Greek and what impressed us was his thoroughly Lenten (fish & seafood) menu just to nudge the RCC and Protestant clients to keep their Lenten discipline. What a wonder. Fr. John attended and was most edified by the good company and their conversation. Fr. Lloyd gifted Matushka Deborah with a wonderful original edition of *Queen Alexandra's Gift Book, Photographs from My Camera* which was published in 1908 and the sales were entirely given to Charity. Two photos from the collection are partially reproduced here as a representation of this notable work. Fr. Lloyd also donated a very pleasant Cope of the finest workmanship. We plan to appear in this vestment on Palm Sunday. The faithful are advised to bring dark sunglasses to the Liturgy because this Cope is beyond spectacular. Fr. Lloyd sends his love to all and devoutly wishes he could be with us in Denver. He especially expresses his thanks for the birthday and Ordination cards sent from St. Mark's. The faithful who take an instant to sign such greetings have little idea how much they mean to the recipients. People thrive on loving kindness... who would have thought of that? The next time you get up and start your prayers at 5 o'clock just remember that Fr. Lloyd is doing the same for you.



These photos from the *Gift Book* are of the Emperor's children who were Martyred with the Russian Royal family by Communist atheists following orders from Lenin in 1918. Interesting that the political Left have given both Soviet Communism and German National Socialism (Nazis) to the general unhappiness of humanity... not to mention Cambodian genocide and a multitude of atrocities. The Left seem to have nearly outdone the Arab and Turk Muslims for sheer slaughter of unsubmitive populations. The Armenian holocaust is remembered in April.

The Benedictine Fellowship of St. Laurence announce that a builder has been engaged to start immediately on the First Phase of construction of a large Chapel and guest quarters at the 560 acre Tallahassee Creek property. Construction is scheduled to take seven months with completion before All Saints' Day 2008.

Looking to April, His Grace, Bishop Basil is offering a Men's Retreat at the Capuchin monastery at Victoria, Kansas on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday the 4th through 6th of April. Fr. John and a number of pilgrims from St. Mark's will, God helping, attend. Fr. John plans to take the DH 4 from Hays' Field on Sunday morning at dawn and return to Denver by mid morning in time for the Anglican chant Matins and the Litany and Communion Office. There are not many of these aeroplanes still in service.



Also, we have just learned that the VRev Chad Richard Hatfield, brother in law to our own Br. David Gray, OSB Oblate, will offer a Lenten Retreat on Saturday, 5 April in Denver at a location not specific as of the murky communications from the Byzantine authority. We will announce the venue so soon as we learn of it.

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